

DARWEN VALE HIGH SCHOOL

An Aldridge Community Academy 

September 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to remind you of the importance of good attendance and punctuality at the academy and how detrimental a poor attendance and punctuality can be and its effects on the long-term educational outcomes of your child. At our last OFSTED we received a *Requires Improvement* grade by OFSTED, one of the few barriers to awarding the school a 'Good' grade was the poor attendance of some students and groups of students. Below is the extract relating to attendance from the report.

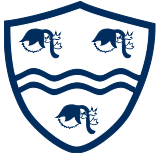
Some pupils' attendance is much lower than it should be. During the current school year, rates of absence have increased further. Rates of absence are particularly high for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Too many pupils are regularly absent from school. This is having a negative impact on pupils' learning because they miss too many lessons. It is exacerbating the gaps in their knowledge.

As you can see from the above paragraph this is clearly an area which requires significant improvement for 2022-23. Below are the figures, by year group, for our school's attendance during the last academic year compared to national averages (Sept – March, pre COVID).

Year Group	National Average Pre COVID	Darwen Vale 2021-22
7	95.6%	90.8
8	94.8%	89.5
9	94.2%	89.3
10	93.8%	87.5
11	93.8%	87.9
National	95.3%	89.2

The table above shows attendance at school has dropped since return from the pandemic. This lower figure is replicated across the country as national attendance figures have fallen. The expectation is that students will achieve a minimum attendance of 95% for the forthcoming academic year. The table below shows the effect of absence in terms of lessons missed.

If your attendance in a school year was ...	You would have lost approximately...	You would have missed approximately...
95%	9 Days	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	145 Lessons
80%	38 Days	190 Lessons
75%	48 Days	240 Lessons



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The current scientific evidence states that pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs 5-9 or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs 5-9 or equivalent including English and mathematics, than pupils missing 15-20% of school. Attendance at school will be compulsory from September and any non-attendance will be dealt with in the usual manner. Should your child's attendance fall below 90% you will be classed as persistence absence and are vulnerable to a fine. Can I also remind all parents that any holidays taken during term time will be classed as unauthorised absence and will result in a fine, as recommended by the government.

We do appreciate that children do fall ill during term time, and I would like to remind you of the importance of reporting that absence. Should you need to report an absence you should phone the school before 8:30 and leave a message with the reason for absence. This will be classed as an authorised absence. Should your child fall below 90% all absences regardless of notification will be classed as persistent and no longer authorised without medical documentation. I encourage you to look at the attendance section of our school website which contains recommended days absent for common illnesses supplied by the NHS.

For the reasons stated in the letter you will now be aware of the importance of school attendance, the impact poor attendance will have on your child's educational outcomes, how to report absence and what will happen should you child be absent from school. I am sure that with your continued support and engagement with school we will see attendance grow and ensure the life chances of pupils are not affected. Should you wish to discuss any of the above information with me please don't hesitate to contact me.

All future correspondence will be sent to you via Bromcom.

Kind regards,

Andrew Bradley
(Assistant Principal)